Exile Wessin to Return To Dominican Republic

12-18-68

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Special to The Washington Post

MIAMI, Dec. 17 — Former Dominican Republic strongman Elias Wessin y Wessin said today he would return to Santo Domingo from exile next month to take personal command of his campaign for the presidency.

The burly tank commander, who led "loyalist" forces in the Dominican civil war, has been living quietly in Miami since September, 1965, when he was hustled out of his country as part of a peace settlement.

Wessin has said he will be the candidate of his rightist Quisqueyan Democratic Party (PQD) in presidential elections scheduled for 1970. He has been actively lobbying to return home for more than a year.

Wessin's plan to return was made possible last week when Dominican Republic President Joaquin Balaguer announced that a ban on exiled principals of the war would be lifted Jan. 10.

Balaguer's action presumably also will clear the way for the possible return of Col. Francisco Caamano Deno, an arch-rival of Wessin's who commanded "constitutionalist" forces in the war. Exiled as military attache in London, Caamano disappeared in October, 1967, and is thought to be in Cuba.

Balaguer has promised to allow Dominicans exiled after the war to return to the country in time for the 1970 elections. He has repeatedly warned, however, that he considers Wessin a threat to stability.

Wessin said at his Miami home today he had not yet decided the precise date "but I'll be leaving next month. I'm desperate to return."

"I plan to start establishing contact with national and regional party officials when I return," he said. Wessin said he would comply with a Dominican law that limits open campaigning to the final three months before an election.

Wessin is technically the alternate Dominican delegate to the United Nations, but he has never assumed the post.